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Note verbale dated 25 June 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the State of Bahrain to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to enclose the text of the speech of H.H. Shaikh Hamad Bin Essa Al-Khalifa, the Amir of the State of Bahrain, on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

The Permanent Mission of the State of Bahrain to the United Nations would appreciate it if the text of the speech could be issued as an official document both of the General Assembly, under agenda item 114, and of the Security Council.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 25 June 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Statement by His Highness Shaikh Hamad Bin Essa Al-Khalifa, Amir of the State of Bahrain, on the occasion of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June 2001

On an occasion such as this, the international community must remember and must express its sympathy for every human being, anywhere in the world, who is abused and wronged in the process of claiming his rights, performing his duty or defending his homeland, his values and his principles.

To do so is a source of pride for us in the State of Bahrain, which was founded primarily on justice, peace and tolerance, has defended the principles of truth and freedom and has now embarked upon the creation of a politically and legally appropriate climate for the protection of human rights in all fields, with the agreement of all, leaders and people alike, and in the light of the principles enshrined in the Constitution and the National Charter that represents the consensus of the people of Bahrain, embracing as it clearly does the protection of the rights and freedoms of all in accordance with the sublime message of Islam, constitutional guarantees and recognized human values and based as it is on the principle of general amnesty that we have proclaimed as our guarantee to all regardless of their station.

It gives us joy and happiness to join with the Bahrain Association for Human Rights and with the Human Rights Committee of the Shura Council in commemorating the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and to speak on this occasion of the great interest accorded to human rights issues in Bahrain. Throughout its long history, the civilization of Bahrain has embraced a variety of ideas and beliefs and has provided a rarely matched example with the celebrated spiritual and intellectual tolerance and cultural heritage of its Kingdom. This is today embodied in the political and social transformations Bahrain is experiencing in a healthy climate of open and constructive dialogue on all the issues of concern to a homeland that is dear to all its people, foremost among them issues of concern to the human being, who represents the wealth of the homeland and is the mainstay of its development and advancement.

The commemoration of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is to be regarded as a humanitarian manifestation that is worthy of esteem. In participating in this international commemoration, the State of Bahrain has in view one incontrovertible fact, namely that human welfare and the enjoyment of human rights are the sublime goal and the ultimate objective of all the country's development plans, in all fields and at all levels.

Bahrain has affirmed the universality of human rights, it has respected them at the national and international levels since independence, and its laws and regulations have adopted all of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the domestic level, the Charter of National Action demonstrates our resolve to ensure respect for human rights and to give all citizens the chance to participate in shaping the future of the homeland. It does so by virtue of the provisions it contains, which were drafted with a view to strengthening basic rights and fundamental freedoms and establishing the administrative and legal structures necessary to give effect to the principles on which all human rights are based.

We are sure that Bahraini non-governmental organizations and associations will play a vital role in this process and that they will strive to ensure that we can cooperate and can assist all of those concerned to achieve the sublime goal of the Charter, namely a better future for Bahrain and all its people.

At the international level, Bahrain has acceded to a number of important treaties and conventions in the human rights field, the most important being the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also upgraded its close relations and active cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations concerned with human rights with a view to protecting and promoting human rights in all parts of the world.

Torture is a heinous crime that is outlawed by Bahraini law, just as it is rejected by the teachings of our Islamic religion and condemned by our traditions and our cultural heritage.

Today, as we in this region of the world commemorate this international occasion, we can only express our deep sympathy for the suffering of Palestinian human beings — children, women and men — in striving to regain their basic rights in their own homeland in accordance with the resolutions that embody international legitimacy. The time has now come for all States and governments to honour those resolutions without employing double standards so as to protect the future of this same international legitimacy in all parts of the contemporary world and in order to ensure equality and justice for all peoples without distinction. In what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories Israel is in clear violation of the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other legal instruments relating to human rights as well as of the Geneva Convention IV relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

In closing, it must be said that it is essential to stress the unity and indivisibility of human rights and that civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights are complementary. From this historic juncture, the State of Bahrain sets out together with the entire world to promote a noble human goal whose essence and objective is man himself by strengthening and protecting human rights in their entirety. It is God Who grants success.